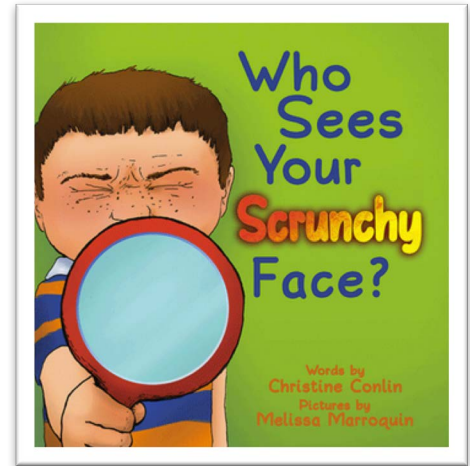


FEATURE ARTICLE

A Fun Way to Encourage Kids to Express Themselves

By Rachel M. Anderson, Contributing Writer

(Minnetonka, MN) – From the moment they emerge from the womb kids are expressive. Initially, crying is their main means of communication, but it isn't long before the baby begins to expand his or her communication skills by babbling, laughing and smiling when he or she is happy and content.



“Children are also very good at letting you know when they are upset,” says Christine Conlin of Minnetonka, Minn. Her kids, Jack and Sami, are teenagers now, but she still has vivid memories of her older child’s most expressive means of communication.

“When Jack wasn’t happy, or we told him ‘No,’ he would get a scrunchy face,” recalls Conlin. “He would shut his eyes as tight as he could, frown and scrunch his face. He looked as if he was going to explode.”

Jack Conlin is 17-years-now, but those faces he used to make are still clear in his mother’s mind. She recently checked one of the items on her bucket list off when she became the published author of a book based on Jack’s antics.

Who Sees Your Scrunchy Face? was released by Beaver’s Pond Press of Edina, Minn., in April 2016. The children’s book tells the story of an expressive seven-year-old named Jack. Life is pretty good for Jack, but sometimes things don’t go his way and he shows his “scrunchy face.”

Who sees Jack’s scrunchy face, and who never, ever sees it? The cast of characters featured in the book include Jack’s sister, Sami, his dog, Jake, his mom and dad, teacher, babysitter and grandma.

Conlin says her book is intended for readers between the ages of 4 and 7. “Kids spend so much time on electronic devices these days and not enough with books in their hands. I feel that reading an actual book is extremely important. Physical books were a big influence on me as I was growing up. I remember from a very young age, my Mom would be reading to us, taking us daily to the library and encouraging us to always be reading a new book,” said Conlin, who considers Judy Blume her favorite childhood author, and her early love for books to have greatly influenced her desire to become a writer.

A study done by the Sesame Street workshop a few years ago, and published in *Publisher’s Weekly*, confirms Conlin is onto something. The study says, “children who read enhanced e-books (e-books that include interesting features like embedded media, interactivity and narration) recalled significantly fewer narrative details than children who read the print version of the same

story. The enhanced e-book was also less effective than the print and basic e-book in supporting the benefits of co-reading, because it prompted more non-content-related interactions.”

Reviewers say parents and grandparents will enjoy reading this book aloud and exploring scrunchy and happy faces in the mirrors on the cover and back of the book. Midwest Book Review says the book, “Will prove to be a unique and enduringly popular addition to family, preschool, elementary school and community library picture book collections.”

“It was very important to me to have the mirrors on the book. All kids like to see themselves, and the mirrors make the book interactive. I feel they are the key to helping readers personalize the story and make it their own,” says Conlin.

For more information, or to purchase a copy of *Who Sees Your Scrunchy Face?*, which retails for \$18.95, visit www.scrunchyfaces.com. Books are available for purchase at The General Store in Minnetonka, Minn., as well as on the author’s website, Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com.

About the Author

Lifelong Minnesotan **Christine Conlin** is an English major who always wanted to be an author, but her career took her to technology marketing. This is her first book, inspired by childhood memories of her mother saying, “Don’t get ugly with me,” when Christine would give her mom “the look.” Christine and her husband, John, now call that same look a “scrunchy face” on their kids, Jack and Sami. Outside of writing and marketing, Christine dreams of becoming a drummer, hoping to one day play “We Got the Beat” by the Go-Go’s.



EDITOR’S NOTE: This article is being offered for your use copyright free and cost free. If you prefer to arrange an interview with author Christine Conlin for a story of your own, or request a review copy of *Who Sees Your Scrunchy Face?* Contact Rachel M. Anderson, Publicist, at 952-240-2513 or rachel@rmapublicity.com.

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